

SENATE RESOLUTION 110
By Crutchfield

A RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to maintain funding for the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant.

WHEREAS, the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant ("JABG") was enacted in the 2002 reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act; and

WHEREAS, this grant provides dollars for use by states and units of local government to promote greater accountability in the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, between 1998 and 2002, the state of Tennessee received \$20,757,000 in JABG funds for accountability-based juvenile justice system programs; and

WHEREAS, rural counties across the state have received funds to assist with juvenile court services and with decreasing the backlog of juvenile cases; and

WHEREAS, the types of programs in Tennessee currently being funded by the JABG include: 1) intensive probation services; 2) residential observation and assessment services; 3) intensive after care services; 4) alternative school and summer adventure-based programs; 5) additional juvenile court officers and referees to handle cases; 6) improved data systems for tracking juvenile cases; and 7) new youth and drug courts for diversion from the regular juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, because of the JABG funds, juvenile courts in rural areas, which normally have minimal resources, now have a greater variety of services to meet more individualized needs; and

WHEREAS, because of the services enabled by the JABG funds, juvenile offense referrals in Tennessee for crimes such as homicide, robbery, aggravated assault, rape, larceny, and burglary have been reduced by 16 percent between 1997 and 2001; and

WHEREAS, the JABG funds are providing for seven staff positions and community-based services through OASIS Center, YCAP Positive Beginnings program, Save Our Children and Frank Reed Memorial Tutoring Program, all of which are community-based youth serving non-profit agencies in Nashville, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, because of services provided by JABG funds, the Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County juvenile court's central intake diversion unit was able to divert 1,700 youth out of the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, JABG funds are being used in Davidson County to support an onsite mental health specialist in the juvenile court, who facilitates intervention with the mental health cooperative and provides the court with information on youth who are acting in ways that warrant evaluation; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to maintain JABG funds to continue the success of reducing juvenile crime in Tennessee and providing more individualized, accountability-based interventions for youth involved with the juvenile courts; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That the continued success in the reduction of juvenile crime in Tennessee and the increase of vital services provided to children who are in the juvenile criminal system is dependent upon the renewal of Juvenile Accountability Block Grant funds by the federal government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the select committee strongly urges the United States Congress and the President of the United States to restore funding for the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant because of the tremendous value these funds provide for local communities in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit enrolled copies of this resolution to each member of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation, to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States, to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate